

Old Capitol Historical Facts
For address to Senate and House
Tuesday, January 6, 2009

- The Old Capitol was built in 1839 making it the oldest building in downtown Jackson.
- It was designed by William Nichols, who also was the architect for the Governor's Mansion (built in 1842), the Lyceum at Ole Miss and the State Penitentiary, which was located where the New Capitol now stands. He designed state capitols in North Carolina, Louisiana and Alabama as well.
- Many men traveled to Jackson to find work, including Charles Manship, who was an ornamental painter. He specialized in "marbling and graining" – making wood look like slabs of marble and more expensive material. He became mayor of Jackson during the Civil War.
- Many pieces of significant legislation were implemented in the Old Capitol.
- In 1839, the Married Women's Property Act was first passed. It allowed married women to own property apart from their husbands. Mississippi was the first in the country to pass such a law.
- In 1871, the Legislature created what is now the Mississippi University for Women and, in 1871, Alcorn State University was created.
- It was one of the few buildings in Jackson to survive the Civil War and was occupied several times by Union troops.
- When the Legislature and state government outgrew the Old Capitol, a New Capitol was built and opened in 1903.
- Afterwards, the Old Capitol went through many transitions, the most unusual being the site of the State Fair. Animals, bales of cotton and other exhibits were brought inside for display. The building has served as a state office building.

- Dignitaries such as Eudora Welty and Willie Morris have lain in state there.

This restoration cost a total of \$16 million. About \$14.2 million was from state funds.